

Industry Standard WebPosition Gold Keeps Getting Better and Better

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If you were to look in the toolboxes of professional search engine optimizers, Web masters, and Web site owners from around the world, what one software program would appear as a staple in virtually every arsenal?

WebPosition Gold.

Those of us in the industry have watched its beginnings as WebPosition Analyzer and stayed by its side up to its present power-packed form, WebPosition Gold Version 1.60 (<http://www.acws.com/wpg>). In fact, WebPosition has been a household name since "search engine optimization" first became an industry!

Like many software programs that have made it to the top, Gold has weathered a few ups and downs, including the recent criticism of automated querying software by some of the engines. Through it all, First Place has continued to try to reach an agreement with the engines, because their philosophy hasn't changed. Gold was created for the do-it-yourselfers who want to work on their sites themselves-the "little" guys like you and me. We deserve to be able to check our rankings, and First Place Software is determined to let us continue doing just that.

We mentioned that Gold is a power-packed program, which is even more evident with its latest release, version 1.60. After working with the program myself, I knew the time had come for me to highlight Gold in an article by itself.

Let's begin with an overview of Gold, for those who might not be

familiar with it.

Some software programs have only one function. They may submit your site to the engines, or they may check your site's rankings. With Gold, though, everything is packed tightly together in one neat package-vital functions that you need in order to work with the search engines and directories.

Let's look at Gold's seven major features:

* Reporter

I've always said that WebPosition Gold is "worth its weight in Gold" with its Reporter feature alone.

Think about it this way. Without knowing the rankings of your Web site, you have no idea what changes you need to make to boost traffic to your site. Knowing your rankings is crucial to an online business, and Gold's Reporter feature has always handled this task with the utmost efficiency.

* Page Generator

It's time for a little honesty here. When Page Generator was first introduced in the initial version of Gold, I wasn't impressed. Pages created using Page Generator all looked alike. Even back then, when we weren't as concerned with spam filters and the problems with duplicate or mirror sites as we are today, I still wanted doorway pages to look like any other page of a site, rather than "cookie cutter" pages.

Believe me, Page Generator has come a long way from its initial release!

You can now create your own template that's based on the general format of your site. Then, answer a few choice questions from Page Generator, such as what keywords you want to focus on, which engine, title of the page, and so forth, and then cut/paste your page's unique content into your own template. Click Start, and your page is instantly created for you, but in your format!

* Page Critic

Page Critic is just that: a "critic" that offers pointed suggestions based on the engine of your choice.

We all know the importance of comparing our pages to top ranking pages for our keyword phrase, but it's very time consuming to do it manually. Page Critic makes it simple, and it gives you a choice.

You can compare your page to a specific page, or you can compare your page to the top 10 pages under a particular keyword phrase.

But with so many of the engines placing other results at the top of their search results, does Gold know to go through the GoTo and Direct Hit results, for example, to the actual top 10 listings?

According to Brent Winters, President of First Placement Software, the answer is yes. Winter explains, "WebPosition intelligently skips the analysis of any listings that are not indexed based on the content of the page. We are continually updating the product to keep pace with what listings to analyze and what listings to skip."

* Upload Manager

When working with numerous pages, it's easy to miss uploading a few here and there. With Upload Manager, forgetting to upload pages isn't an option, because it tracks new pages and changed pages since your last upload.

* Submitter

Gold has its own Submitter feature. But, haven't we always been told to submit to the major engines manually? Will using this feature get you in trouble with the engines?

Winters explains, "WebPosition's Submitter does everything possible to emulate manual submissions and in some cases, improve upon it. We've studied carefully how a submission looks to the search engine when coming from a browser so we can submit in exactly the same way as a browser.

"The latest version of WebPosition Submitter (version 1.60) even includes advanced technologies that can give you an advantage over manual submissions in the browser. For example, some search engines will pass you a cookie (i.e., a tracking code) when you submit. This is presumably to track how many times a particular user submits to the search engine regardless of the domain name. If you use your browser with cookies turned on (the default), then the engine can easily track you. If they feel you are submitting too much, they might label you as a spammer. What are these `user' limits? Nobody knows for sure, and they could change at any time.

"Being tracked by cookies is particularly dangerous for people that submit a lot of Web sites, such as search engine optimization companies. An engine could decide that if you are routinely submitting say a dozen or more domains a day or week that you are a spammer, or you are someone that they may want to scrutinize more closely by human review.

"One solution is to disable cookies in your browser. However, many major Web sites you go to today require you to accept a

cookie in order for that site to work properly. Therefore, turning off cookies all the time in your browser is not feasible for most people, nor should it be necessary.

"If you turn cookies off only when submitting, then you run the risk of the engine silently discarding your submission because you didn't accept their cookie. Many bulk submission products or services do not support cookies. Therefore, the engine could discriminate against anyone who does not accept cookies fearing they are a spammer. The last I heard, over 90% of people on the Web accept cookies, so by not accepting them, you are singling yourself out into the minority.

"Therefore, WebPosition will accept cookies when the engine hands them out. However, it is smart enough to not store the cookies permanently on your hard drive. Instead, it requests a new cookie on each URL submission. This simulates a unique user making the submission each time (or potentially the same user who switched to a new computer or browser).

"In conclusion, this technology actually makes it more difficult for a search engine to track your activities versus manual submission. In addition, WebPosition prevents you from accidentally over submitting, submitting the same URL twice in the same day, or submitting URLs that don't exist because you accidentally misspelled them. Besides saving you time and promoting consistency in submission, another advantage of letting WebPosition do the work is that it tracks when you last submitted so you have a history of what you did. In these ways, WebPosition's `automated submissions' are superior to `doing it by hand' which some people still like to advocate."

* Traffic Analyzer

With Version 1.60, Gold entered into a partnership with HitLinks, a traffic analysis service, to provide up-to-date, accurate analysis of traffic to your site. With this new Traffic Analyzer service, Gold is once again appealing to the "well-rounded" approach of search engine optimization by providing the necessary tools for the success of your Web site.

* Scheduler

Scheduler makes it simple to check your rankings during non-business hours of the engines, then have those results waiting for you when you get to work the next day.

As you can see, Gold offers a wide variety of functions that enable you to work effectively on your Web site. But, those aren't the only advantages to using Gold.

Additional Advantages to Using WebPosition Gold

* Gold now supports over twenty search engines, directories, and even pay-per-placement engines.

* Unless the program is going through a major upgrade, like when it upgraded from Analyzer to Gold, users get updates to the program for free.

* Updates are simple to download and install. The program does it for you!

* Throughout every area of the program, words are highlighted. Click on those words for further explanation. It's like having a mini tutorial available for you at any time.

* Their technical support people are second to none. I've worked with them for years, and they've always responded to questions or problems quickly and completely.

* The main tools you need to work on your site are all contained within this one, powerful software program, which can certainly be an advantage to many people versus having to learn several different programs.

But . . . doesn't the Academy promote Search Engine Optimizer (SEO) software?

Let's get this out of the way, because I'm sure the question is floating around in many of your minds. Plus, this is a question that we, at the Academy, get asked frequently.

Why are we promoting a software program that is a competitor of the Academy's own software, Search Engine Optimizer (SEO) (<http://www.se-optimizer.com>)?

Simple. The programs are meant to complement each other, not to compete against each other. And, they do a beautiful job of it.

Search Engine Optimizer (SEO) has one function only: it runs your pages through a series of checks and offers suggestions and reminders that can boost your chances at top rankings. As we've already discussed, Gold has many features.

Therefore, the only portion of Gold that could be compared to SEO is Page Critic. However, Page Critic's main function is to compare your pages to top ranking pages across the Net. It concentrates on keyword weight, frequency, and prominence. It also offers some excellent general suggestions with links to pertinent information.

On the other hand, SEO's runs your pages through a series of over 60 checks, then quickly tells you what you need to do to improve your chances at top rankings. It deals very little with keyword weight, and it doesn't compare your page to another page. SEO is designed to concentrate on your page only, as well as links going out of your page due to the importance of theme analysis.

Here's another consideration of why the programs should be used in conjunction with each other. In this rapidly changing

industry, no one person knows everything. We all rely on experts who back their findings with research.

Who are the experts behind these software programs?

Gold is backed by industry leader Brent Winters of First Place Software as well as his entire staff. SEO is backed by Robin Nobles and Terry Plank of the Academy of Web Specialists; folks like Stephen Mahaney, John Heard, and Ginette Degner with Planet Ocean Communications; and Roberto Grassi with GR Software.

When you lock those two programs together, using their features to strengthen each other and their expert researchers gathering data on your behalf, you can't beat the power of a combined Gold and SEO!

Finally, what does the future hold for WebPosition Gold?

What can we expect to see from Gold (<http://www.acws.com/wpg>) in the future?

Version 2.0 is just over the horizon. Though we don't know any particulars about the new version, based on Gold's past success, we have no doubt that it will be dynamite.

And, rest assured that when it's released, I'll be reviewing a copy of it here. So, stay tuned!

Robin Nobles is Director of Training for the Academy of Web Specialists. Robin has taught well over a thousand students in her online and onsite search engine positioning courses during the past several years. Her latest books, *Web Site Analysis and Reporting* and *Streetwise Maximize Web Site Traffic*, can be ordered through Amazon. Visit the Academy's training site (http://www.academywebspecialists.com/more_info) to learn more about their search engine ranking courses and software solution.

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